

George and Jeanne de Mohrenschildt check their equipment before starting on what may be 7,000-mile hike through South America.



Pan American

It all began with a dream. A dream shared by two children in foreign lands half-a-world apart.

If it is carried through to its furthermost goal, a Dallas couple will have added a new chapter to stranger-than-fiction adventure lore.

For no one has ever done what Mr. and Mrs. George de Mohrenschildt have set out to do — a 7,000-mile, two-year "hike" from North Central Mexico through Central America to Chile.

George de Mohrenschildt, an exploration geologist and petroleum engineer, was stricken with "jungle fever" when he was still a small boy in Baku, Russia, where he was born of Swedish parents. The idea persisted through his growing-up years, as his father's affiliation with the Nobel oil interests took the family all over Europe and while he was "attending school in five languages" — Russian, German, Polish, French and English.

Since coming to this country 22 years ago, taking his American citizenship and attaining stature as an expert in his field, Mr. de Mohrenschildt has traveled the globe. On assignment by the State Department, he was the first U.S.A. oil specialist to penetrate Yugoslavia after the war. His work has carried him all over the Mid-East, Europe, South America, Mexico, the Caribbean area, and to Africa where his extensive studies brought enough jungle experience to rekindle the boyhood spark.

Jeanne LeGon de Mohrenschildt as a child, too, spent her imaginative dream-life in an exotic jungleground. Her mother was Russian, her father a French engineer who was building the Far Eastern railroad when she was born in China. There she lived until she boarded the last boat to offer escape to America when war's devastation and turmoil isolated her native land.

In New York, she began a successful career in fashion designing which eventually brought her to Dallas.

Two years ago she and Mr. de Mohrenschildt were married and one day, soon after, they discovered they were also wedded to a shared dream. So they started making plans for that indefinite time when they could take a leave of absence from their respective work — "and from routine, television and telephones" — to make the dream come true.

Then, rather suddenly, they determined not long ago that the time had become definite. Vague planning changed into the realistic preparations of typhoid, yellow fever, tetanus and smallpox inoculations, of visas, of assembling the lightweight but adequate fishing and hunting gear to augment the meager food supplies that can be added to the bed rolls, tent and other essentials in their burro's pack.

A third member of the family-party was readied for the trip. Nero, a 5-month-old Toy Manchester, took his shots without flinching and developed an appetite for fruits and melons. He accompanied the active sports-loving de Mohrenschildts on outings where he mastered the art of swimming and of balancing on the back of an accommodating donkey "stand-in" for the forth-

Walking Tour

By GRAYDON HEARTSILL

Photos by Peggie Mazzatorta

coming burro-companion. Nero even obtained his own passport, a certificate from the Live Stock Sanitation Commission of Texas.

Mrs. de Mohrenshildt assumed the role of wardrobe-mistress for the expedition.

"We're traveling light," she explained before their take-off in October, "but we must be prepared for both hot and cold weather."

"Except for a pair of wool slacks, socks and helmet and a couple of sweaters, the few things I'm taking are in easy-care Dacron — shorts, slacks and two blouses from the 'Music Man' group I've just finished designing for Justin McCarty's fall collection.

"George's assortment is as limited and Nero's even more so — just a little wool coat. We'll add native Indian clothes as we need them."

Partly business, mostly pleasure — that's the way Mr. de Mohrenshildt describes the adventure.

He'll make archeological studies in the State of Oaxaca, explore oil possibilities in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama, investigate mines, prolific in gold and other precious metals, in inaccessible regions of Costa Rica.

Life Magazine and National Geographic have requested a running account in reports and photographs that will chronicle the journey.

Mrs. de Mohrenshildt has promised the McCarty Mfg. firm, Women's Wear and The Times Herald sketches and color notes that transform the picturesque Indian costumes into fresh fashion ideas.

As this story appears in print, the Dallas gypsies are due to be "toughening up" with a preliminary trek through the highlands of Mexico from Torreon. That, they figure, should re-enlist their youthful experiences as Boy and Girl Scouts (and subsequently as adult Scout leaders) so they'll be prepared for the stretches of wilderness and unexplored jungles ahead.

"In this walking trip, you face a glorious experience and one which is not impossible," wrote Gordon Wasson, widely known New York banker and author currently planning to be a member of a professional archeological party which has invited the de Mohrenshildts to join up for some Guatemalan delvings in November. "But it cannot be planned too exactly. At each point you will have to decide what route to take next."

Tentatively, then, the de Mohrenshildt itinerary takes a 3,000-mile meander through Guatemala, San Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama. Then they'll make up their minds whether to add 4,000 miles — and another year — through Peru, Bolivia and Chile.

Closest exploit to the one begun by the Dallas couple was the renowned "Tcheloffely's Ride" on which a transplanted English colonel in the '20s proved the stamina of Argentine ponies by riding when he could, and taking to the waterways when his two mounts couldn't penetrate the jungles, from Buenos Aires to Washington.

But he didn't walk it.



Mr. and Mrs. George de Mohrenschildt plan a year's hike through:

- ① Dallas
- ② Guatemala
- ③ San Salvador
- ④ Nicaragua
- ⑤ Costa Rica
- ⑥ Panama



If things go well, the Dallas couple may extend their hike through:

- ⑦ Peru
- ⑧ Bolivia
- ⑨ Chile